

Agency: Commerce, Community and Economic Development**Grants to Named Recipients (AS 37.05.316)****Grant Recipient: Food Bank of Alaska****Federal Tax ID: 92-0073175****Project Title:****Project Type:** Remodel, Reconstruction and Upgrades

Food Bank of Alaska - Infrastructure for Alaska's Statewide Food Bank Network

State Funding Requested: \$10,000,000**House District: Statewide (1-40)**

One-Time Need

Brief Project Description:

Food Bank of Alaska is requesting one-time capital funding to expand the infrastructure capacity of its statewide network of 150+ food banks, food pantries, and meal programs. Many of Food Bank of Alaska's agency partners need more storage and distribution space, additional cold and frozen storage, and equipment like forklifts, ATVs and vehicles.

Funding Plan:

Total Project Cost:	\$10,000,000
Funding Already Secured:	(\$0)
FY2023 State Funding Request:	<u>(\$10,000,000)</u>
Project Deficit:	\$0

Funding Details:

n/a

Detailed Project Description and Justification:

Food Bank of Alaska (FBA) is requesting one-time capital funding to expand the infrastructure capacity of its statewide network of 150+ food banks, food pantries, and meal programs. Many of Food Bank of Alaska's agency partners need more storage and distribution space, additional cold and frozen storage, and equipment like forklifts, ATVs and vehicles. Investment in this much-needed infrastructure would help meet the needs of food insecure Alaskans now and into the future.

The anti-hunger network plays a critical role in ensuring Alaskans have enough food to eat, and never has their importance been more apparent than during the pandemic, when food insecurity rates reached unprecedented levels. Food Bank of Alaska's agency partners saw an average of a 75% increase in need at the beginning of the pandemic and continue to see elevated levels of need into 2022 compared with pre-pandemic levels.

Many of Food Bank of Alaska's agency partners operate on shoestring budgets and struggle with a lack of adequate space and infrastructure. The pandemic highlighted these gaps and deficiencies, and the capacity challenges of these organizations became very apparent. Investing in these areas would remove bottlenecks in distribution and allow for the distribution of more healthy food, while reducing overall food waste.

There is a high desire for healthy, nutritious food among low-income Alaskans, and 81% of Food Bank of Alaska clients

report purchasing unhealthy, processed food because it was the cheapest option. Protein and fresh produce remain the most in-demand items at our pantry partners. However, these kinds of food often require cold or frozen storage, and Food Bank of Alaska's partners' limited access to these kinds of storage mean less of these healthy foods can be distributed.

Investment in the infrastructure of this under-resourced network of organizations will ensure that our state is able to maximize federal nutrition assistance programs, and increase the sourcing and distribution of nutritious, fresh, frozen, and local food. For example, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced a new Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement Program (LFPA), presenting up to \$400 million for food assistance purchases of domestic local foods to be distributed through feeding programs, including food banks, schools and organizations that reach underserved communities. Food Bank of Alaska anticipates having a role in distributing this food and boosting the infrastructure capacity of their agency network would ensure our state is able to fully maximize these federal funds.

The needs of Alaska's food bank network are varied and substantial. Food Bank of Alaska is requesting \$10 million in one-time infrastructure funding to strengthen their ability to serve the food needs of Alaskans statewide. Food Bank of Alaska plans to do a comprehensive survey of our partners statewide on specific infrastructure needs, and this requested funding would be used to fund projects identified in the survey. Some examples of previously identified infrastructure needs include:

Southeast Alaska Food Bank, Juneau - \$1 million

They are seeking a larger space in a more accessible location to better serve the Southeast region. They currently have a 2,400 sq. ft. facility but need a 5,000 sq. ft. facility to grow. They would also benefit from being able to relocate a freezer storage that is currently located four miles from their primary facility.

Breadline, Fairbanks - \$1.25 million

They are seeing a new facility, as they cannot expand programming further in their current space. They only have one small kitchen and can thus only run one program at a time. A new facility close to their current location would make a significant difference.

Bethel Food Bank & Pantry, Bethel - \$310,000

They need to expand current space, including freezer/cooler space. They are currently using a mobile unit connex as a freezer, and they have no backup if this goes down. It was recently down for two months, and they would have lost all their food if it was not the middle of winter. Additional storage is off-site and not ideal. They also need a 4-wheel drive cargo van to keep food safe from the elements while transporting it.

Nome Community Center, Nome- \$25,000

Their ramp and loading deck needs to be rebuilt; it is too small to accommodate their operations. They are focusing on the creation of a community garden and have enough room on their lot to expand the growing space but need more lumber and supplies to renovate a small greenhouse and build a compost bin. They would also benefit from an additional freezer as the current configuration of freezers they have limits their storage capacity.

Anchor Point Food Pantry, Anchor Point- \$250,000

They currently have no facility while food insecurity has grown substantially over the course of the pandemic. They received 133,000 pounds of food from the Kenai Peninsula Food Bank last year alone. A new facility would allow them to get off the ground and continue serving people in the community.

Willow Food Pantry, Willow- \$200,000

They need to build an addition onto their current facility in light of the growing needs of the community. Their number of clients has doubled since the start of the pandemic and they no longer have enough space.

Kenai Peninsula Food Bank, Soldotna - \$200,000

They would benefit substantially from getting funds for fuel and staff to maintain their ability to deliver food to people around the peninsula. They currently send food to Tyonek, Hope, Seward, Anchor Point, Homer, Ninilchik, and more. A single trip to Moose Pass and Hope requires a staff member and a truck for a full day. They would also benefit from a new loading dock that can accommodate for different trucks as well as a new forklift.

Native Village of White Mountain, White Mountain- \$15,000

They need a vehicle (snow machine or ATV) to deliver food to elders and the disabled in the community.

Upper Susitna Food Pantry, Talkeetna- \$150,000

One of their biggest barriers is personnel and having enough staff to continue their regular services. They want to keep delivery open particularly for seniors but may be unable to do so otherwise. They are in need of a walk-in cooler and also experience a lot of power outages and would benefit from having a backup generator.

Chinik Eskimo Community, Golovin- \$15,000

They need a vehicle (snow machine or ATV) to deliver food to elders and the disabled in the community. They often have individuals using their own personal vehicles and not being compensated for the costs of fuel or any maintenance that needs to be done on them.

Total requested: \$10 million one-time funding

\$4 million -- Directed to Food Bank of Alaska to purchase the warehouse facility that conjoins FBA's current facility. Additional space will allow Food Bank of Alaska to engage in innovative ways to serve hungry Alaskans, such as: a hydroponics growing operation to supply nutritious produce year-round to our agency partners and clients; a commercial kitchen to help prolong the shelf life of donated products and provide learning opportunities for clients; packaging facilities to repack donated products and assemble meals kits; and support for other food systems partners like farmers and food entrepreneurs.

\$6 million -- Infrastructure funding for Food Bank of Alaska's roughly 150 partners around the state, including our three Partner Distribution Organizations (PDOs) who serve regional areas of the state, including the Fairbanks Community Food Bank, Kenai Peninsula Food Bank, and the Southeast Alaska Food Bank. Needs vary by community and organization, and funds will be distributed equitably depending on the amount of food distributed, service area, and organizational needs.

Project Timeline:

Funds will be distributed and spent over a 3 year period. Specific infrastructure projects will be identified within 4 months of notification of award.

Entity Responsible for the Ongoing Operation and Maintenance of this Project:

Food Bank of Alaska and recipient agency partners

Grant Recipient Contact Information:

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Has this project been through a public review process at the local level and is it a community priority? ☐ Yes ☒ No